

Dumont Dunes TRT
MINUTES OF MEETING
August 21, 2007

Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Field Office
Conference Room
2601 Barstow Road
Barstow, CA 92311
(760) 252-6000

1. Call to Order

TRT Chairman Bill Presch called the meeting to order at 10:02 am and led the TRT in a recital of the Pledge of Allegiance.

A. Introductions

Members of the TRT and participating BLM staff introduced themselves:

TRT Members Present:

Dr. William Presch, chairman; California Desert District Advisory Council
Jim Bramham, vice chairman; OHV organizations
Randy Banis, secretary; other motorized recreation
Terry Allen, Nevada OHV interests
David Charlton, California Desert District Advisory Council
John Dagleish, Friends of Dumont Dunes
Gerry Hillier, San Bernardino County
Ron Schiller, California Desert District Advisory Council
Kathleen Stosuy, California OHV interests
Ed Waldheim, California Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission

BLM Staff Present:

Roxie Trost, Manager, Barstow Field Office
Lynnette Elser, Recreation Chief, Barstow Field Office
Dan Briot, Chief Ranger, Barstow Field Office
Larry Blaine, Operations Supervisor
Mike Trost, Maintenance

Members of the General Public Present:

Sophia Merk, Public
Paul Postle, Tecopa Fire Chief

TRT Members Absent:

Sheri Davis, commercial filming, California Desert District Advisory Council

B. Agenda

Bill Presch opened the agenda to additions or changes. The agenda was approved by consent.

C. Minutes

Copies of the draft minutes of the TRT's June 5, 2007, meeting were circulated earlier via email. The minutes were approved by consent.

2. Old Business

A. Dumont Dunes Road and Water Crossing Improvements

Mike Trost reported that the new crushed asphalt base for the Dumont Dunes Road was obtained at a cost of \$11.53 per ton, compared to normal class II base that cost \$23 per ton. Class II base is the biggest contributor of dust, where as the new base will reduce dust and require less watering. Terry Allen agreed that the road has been improved, but felt that it still was not in good condition. He agreed that dust has been reduced, but believed that the road needed more base and that it was spread too thin in many spots.

Mike anticipates obtaining more crushed base in the fall, and that the road will be treated with magnesium chloride to contain the last of the dust. John Dalglish suggested that enough material be acquired so as to build a small stockpile.

Mike also reported on the water crossing widening project that was recently completed. The total cost of the project was \$53,799, including \$29,600 for high quality concrete. After excavation the crossing was 40 feet longer than expected. Also, a third lane was added to the crossing that can be implemented when necessary in the future by widening the road on each side of the crossing. There are now two 12 foot wide lanes in use. Consideration is being given to developing a new trail that will keep the OHV users off the crossing.

Bill Presch requested that the BLM install a sign at the crossing noting that it was funded by user fees.

B. Medical Services Trailer

Larry Blaire updated the TRT on the purchase of a new medical services trailer for Dumont Dunes. Funding the purchase was an State OHV grant of \$22,000, and Challenge Grant of \$29,000. In addition, the trailer manufacturer Forest Rivers covered the remaining \$12,000 as a donation to the BLM.

Guest Tecopa Fire Chief Paul Postle inquired why the BLM's Dumont Dunes crew lodges in Pahrump rather than in Shoshone or Tecopa. Roxie Trost responded it was because Pahrump accommodations were within the per diem. Chief Postle also provided the BLM with another possible water source for dust control on the Dumont road.

Bill Presch asked if there was any progress in developing a water drafting location at the crossing, and Roxie replied that there had not. Roxie further clarified that water drafting was voluntarily ceased by the BLM.

C. Trash Pick-up Update

Lynnette reported her intent to enter into agreement with an area resident to pick up roadside trash during the upcoming season. Mike Trost added that staff will also examine truck beds and trailers for loose trash during exit checks.

Roxie Trost reported on a meeting with Tecopa Fire Chief Paul Postle about the dumping problem and invited him to participate at TRT meetings. Chief Postle reported that the problem was obvious on Sunday evenings and on Monday. He felt that the TRT was not in agreement about the problem. He has observed as many as a dozen RV dumping spots on Old Spanish Trail Highway. Chief Postle suggested that dune users were unaware of locations to dump trash and RV waste. He further noted that the local commercial RV dump site does not allow trash dumping which would be helpful to the whole problem.

Terry Allen reported that dune user groups are trying to redirect traffic off Old Spanish Trail Highway to the main highway through Pahrump. Although longer, it is in better condition and easier on vehicles hauling dune equipment. Terry believed that dune users did know where to dump trash and RV waste and has not yet witnessed highway dumping.

Chief Paul Postle reported that his most recent survey yielded 24 new dump sites from the last big weekend. Roxie reported that Lynnette was trying to locate a honey wagon provider that might want to operate in dunes.

D. Inyo County Closure of Transfer Stations

Gerry Hillier provided background on the issue that impacts the communities nearby the dunes. Roxie reported that she is working with Inyo County to express her concern that the closing of the transfer stations might have a negative impact on the health of surrounding public lands.

Guest Sophia Merk reported that dune users contributed to a large increase in trash collection costs in Shoshone and Tecopa, thereby busting the budget and resulting in the proposal to eliminate trash service countywide. She shared letters to Inyo County from both BLM's Ridgecrest and Barstow offices, describing the Ridgecrest letter as offering help whereas the Barstow letter did not. She suggested that dune users reach out with a letter to the County offering to partner in a solution to the trash problem. She further noted her own survey of one trash transfer station on Old Spanish Trail Highway and saw a majority of visitors were RV's with Nevada plates.

Terr Allen suggested moving the transfer stations away from the roadside to locations less convenient for RV's. Roxie reported that she does staff the transfer station on Sundays and they do not see a large amount of RV traffic.

Chief Postle suggested that the stakeholders work together to create an RV/trash dumping service in Tecopa that would be subsidized by the users. He noted that the problem is not just on big weekends, but throughout the season, and when BLM staff is not present, the problem is greater. He agreed that the community should consider looking for a new transfer station site that is less accessible for RV's.

John Dalglish asked if the BLM could provide a new location for the transfer station, if necessary. Roxie affirmed that it was possible under a BLM program. Ed Waldheim asked for background information on the sewer lagoon, and suggested that the brochure accurately inform users of this opportunity for RV dumping.

Roxie explained that there is a leaking problem with the lagoon that needs to be corrected or dealt with before we can encourage its use. Terry again urged encouraging traffic flow to go through Pahrump rather than Tecopa. Ed reiterated his support for providing dumpsters and a holding tank on site, but acknowledged that others on the TRT do not share his opinion. Ed urged that the brochure be revised to better inform users of RV dump locations. Jim suggested that the BLM alert the Sheriff and CHP of the problem so that they can look for violations when in the area.

Randy Banis circulated copies of recent articles on the trash issue and Dumont Dunes from the Inyo County Register.

Ed Waldheim made a motion that the TRT write a letter to Inyo County suggesting that the Tecopa trash transfer station be moved to a location less convenient for passing by RV's and other traffic. The motion was seconded by Terry Allen and approved by consent.

Bill Presch briefly summarized the discussions regarding RV dumping. Chief Postle asked that the BLM update the TRT on the lagoon issue at its next meeting.

Bill recessed the meeting for lunch at 12:05 pm. The meeting was called back to order at 12:30 pm.

E. Supplemental Rule for a Slow Zone

Bill Presch recounted the TRT's previous discussions about implementing supplemental rules to address problems at the dunes. Chief Ranger Dan Briot reported on the BLM's Supplemental Rules committee which was set up to improve the uniformity of rules among the field offices. He circulated a list of supplemental rules that he is bringing to the committee for their input.

Lynnette Elser suggested revising the stakes prohibition to allow tent and canopy stakes. Randy Banis preferred that the camping in disturbed provisions don't apply to "limited" use areas. Dan explained that this was driven by WEMO and his desire for consistency within the field office. Ron Schiller agreed with Randy.

F. 2008 Fee Collection

Terry Allen went to a presentation by Tonto National Forest on how they sell and issue permits. He reported that they use a network of 190 retail outlets to sell day passes and boat stickers. Outlets include CircleK and Big5. Annual passes are sold only at a Ranger Station as the transaction is more complicated. Passes are sold to vendors at a 5% discount and must be sold at face value. Presenters warned that they would have preferred to have six to eight months to implement. The program depends upon software to perform accounting for the program.

Lynnette Elser updated the TRT on the status of the Dumont Dunes fee increase that was slated for October 1st. Although a Federal Register notice is not required, the fee increase must first be reviewed by the new recreational fee advisory committee which meets for its first time in October. If the new fees receive a positive review by the committee, then the fee increase must be advertised and posted. Lynnette advised the TRT that the interim plan is to sell only weekly passes starting October 1st at the regular rate, then allow users to apply the cost toward an annual permit when available.

Roxie Trost reported that she still did not have an update on the fee contractor audit, and that the contract had not yet been formally terminated. Terry Allen issued his serious concerns that there was too much to do in order to implement the new fees in time for the upcoming season. He warned of a significant loss of fees at the start of the season. To publicize the temporary situation, Terry suggested funding a PSA. Roxie suggested having a dedicated Dumont booth at the Sand Show rather than sharing again with Glamis.

Terry and Ed Waldheim raised the possibility of continuing the same fees for this year, and questioned if there was anything that could be done to speed the process up given the delay posed by the new fee advisory committee. Ed urged Roxie to speak with BLM State Director Mike Pool and seek a waiver to move forward with the new fees. Gerry Hillier suggested that the request come from the Chairman so that it represents the TRT and the DAC.

Terry recapped the most essential and basic things that need to be in place within 45 days in order to launch the program. Roxie suggested a subcommittee that can work more closely on the details, perhaps via conference calls. Participation would be at each members' discretion with no formal quorum required.

3. Members Items

A. Randy Banis

Asked for information about the Barstow office's OHV grant request for fencing at Dumont Dunes. Roxie reported that the project is for nine miles of post and cable fence for the boundary of the Salt Creek ACEC to prevent continued OHV trespass. This will be a two-year project because the project cost exceeds the annual project limit for the grant.

B. John Dalglish

John and Terry Allen reported users requesting that the TRT convene on a Saturday in order to better accommodate their participation. The TRT agreed to do so.

4. Next Meeting

By consent, the TRT set the following date, time and location for its next public meeting:
Tuesday, September 18, 2007, 10:00 AM
BLM Barstow Field Office Conference Room

Also by consent, the TRT set the following Saturday meeting date, time and location:
Saturday, November 17, 2007, 10:00 AM
BLM Barstow Field Office Conference Room

5 Adjournment

By consent, the meeting was adjourned at 2:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Randy Banis
Secretary, Dumont Dunes Technical Review Team

Approved on October 23, 2007

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

Request to install sign at crossing

Bill Presch requested that the BLM install a sign at the crossing noting that it was funded by user fees.

Motion to write letter to Inyo County

Ed Waldheim made a motion that the TRT write a letter to Inyo County suggesting that the Tecopa trash transfer station be moved to a location less convenient for passing by RV's and other traffic. The motion was seconded by Terry Allen and approved by consent.

Update on the lagoon for next TRT meeting

Chief Postle asked that the BLM update the TRT on the lagoon issue at its next meeting.

Letter to BLM State Director requesting implementation of new fees

The Chairman will write a letter to the BLM State Director requesting that the new fees be put into place prior to the meeting of the new recreation fee advisory committee.

Next Meeting

By consent, the TRT set the following date, time and location for its next public meeting: Tuesday, September 18, 2007, 10:00 AM, BLM Barstow Field Office Conference Room. The TRT also set the following date for a Saturday meeting: Saturday, November 17, 2007, 10:00 AM, BLM Barstow Field Office Conference Room.